



NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Releases Health Data for 2011 *Residents are Encouraged to Participate in Future Telephone Surveys*

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is pleased to announce the release of important health-related data collected for 2011. The data was collected as part of the North Dakota Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The 2011 data is now available by visiting www.ndhealth.gov/brfss.

BRFSS data is collected annually through a telephone-based survey that asks questions about risk behaviors, preventative health practices and health-related conditions that contribute to the leading causes of illness and death in our state. The information collected allows health officials to identify and track health behaviors and chronic conditions, track health objectives, evaluate if disease prevention activities are working, and rapidly assess emerging health issues, such as a new influenza strain. While participation in the survey is voluntary, the Department of Health strongly encourages all North Dakota residents, if contacted, to participate in this vitally important survey.

“The data collected through this survey is very valuable and is used by health agencies from the federal to the state to the local level in order to evaluate and implement programs where needed,” said Alice Musumba, BRFSS Program director for the North Dakota Department of Health. “Participation is the key. We know that many people get tired of phone calls asking them to participate in a survey, but we hope that residents understand the value of this information and that it truly will help guide public health services in their own state.”

Traditionally, BRFSS has relied on calls only to landline phones. In the past several years, the number of households that only use a cell phone has steadily increased in both the U.S. and North Dakota. In 2011, more than 40 percent of North Dakota households were cell phone only households. Because of this shift in phone usage, the BRFSS is now including cell phone numbers in the survey to allow for better representation of certain demographic groups that are more likely to only use cell phones. Survey participants are randomly selected to ensure the data will be representative of the population.

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